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17 September 1958

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

17 September 1958

DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

***Taiwan Strait situation:** There was no significant intelligence on Chinese Communist military activity on 16 September. A Soviet note to Japan warned it against permitting American forces to use bases there for "aggressive acts," in an apparent attempt to exploit Japanese fears of becoming involved in a US-Communist war.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

UAR-Syria: The suppression of the Baathist socialist newspaper in Damascus appears to be a move by Nasir against UAR Vice President Akram Hawrani, who used the paper to advance his views. Despite Nasir's efforts to suppress political parties, the strongly Arab nationalist Baath party has continued its political activities. Nasir may attempt to blame its leader, Hawrani, for Syria's economic and administrative woes.

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South Vietnam: President Diem anticipates an upsurge in Communist terrorism and guerrilla activities. Americans and other foreigners in Vietnam--likely targets for assassination attempts--have been advised to take extra precautions, particularly when traveling in the provinces where numerous local officials have been killed within the last year.

III. THE WEST

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Communist China - UN: According to Foreign Minister Udden, Sweden intends "to go all out" for Peiping's admission to the UN. He states that Norway and Denmark are "in full agreement." While all three countries recognize Mao's regime and have consistently opposed the moratorium on its entry into the UN, the emergence of two NATO countries as leaders in this campaign would further undermine Taipei's prestige.

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DAILY BRIEF

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Nasir Moves Against Akram Hawrani

The suppression of al-Rai al-Amm, the Syrian Baathist party newspaper, on 11 September appears to be Nasir's first move in a systematic plan to cut down the influence of UAR Vice President Akram Hawrani and other Baathist leaders.

Hawrani was in the forefront of those who pressed for Syrian union with Egypt and had hoped that his party would dominate the Syrian political scene after union. However, Nasir ordered the dissolution of parties, which the Baath has attempted to resist. Its continued activities at times have run counter to Nasir's policies in the country.

Hawrani, who has helped engineer at least five military coups in Syria but subsequently fell out with coup leaders, may in time break with Nasir and attempt to work against Syria's union with the UAR, possibly with Iraqi Baathists. Open criticism toward the regime has been growing since early summer. Syrians who now dislike the UAR hold the Baath responsible because Hawrani was a moving force for union with Egypt. Nasir, through Abdul Hamid Sarraj, minister of interior for Syria, has overruled Hawrani on several occasions and may attempt to make him the scapegoat for Syria's economic and administrative woes. Lately Nasir has become increasingly irritated with the Baathist leader's attempts to thwart policy by publishing articles in al-Rai al-Amm.

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South Vietnamese Government Anticipates Upsurge
In Communist Violence

President Diem, on the basis of captured documents [redacted] anticipates a sharp upsurge in Communist guerrilla activity and terrorism. Americans and other foreigners in Vietnam may be targets of assassination attempt.

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Diem reports he has information that Communist cadres have been ordered by Hanoi to concentrate on disrupting three major economic programs now being implemented by his government--land reform, resettlement - land development, and agricultural credit. He believes the damaging raid last month on the large Michelin rubber plantation by a Communist-led band of some 400 rebels was part of this campaign.

The Vietnamese Government is taking all possible security measures within the limitations of the difficult terrain, which favors guerrilla warfare. Americans and other foreigners have been advised to take extra precautions, particularly when traveling in the provinces where numerous assassinations of minor Vietnamese officials have already occurred.

Saigon officials are also concerned over recent movements by North Vietnamese Communist forces along the Laotian border and near the 17th parallel, which they feel are related to Chinese Communist intentions in the Taiwan area. Diem has placed his army on semialert and is considering civil defense measures.

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II. THE WEST

Scandinavians to Push for Peiping's Entry Into UN

Swedish Foreign Minister Uden told the British ambassador on 12 September that Sweden intends "to go all out" for Communist China's admission to the UN. Uden claims to have the complete support of Norway and Denmark. While the Scandinavians have already recognized Peiping and for several years have consistently opposed the UN moratorium on Chinese representation, the emergence of two NATO countries as leaders in the fight for Peiping's entry would further weaken Taipei's status at the UN.

The Scandinavian leaders are deeply concerned over the Far East crisis, and Uden in a 14 September speech stated that "it is indeed tragic that a trial of strength between two fighting Chinese parties about a few small islands... may be able to jeopardize world peace." He added that it was "absurd" that Chiang Kai-shek should represent the largest country in Asia at the UN.

Uden apparently believes that with Communist China's entry the UN would provide the proper forum for discussion and negotiations regarding the offshore islands. The Norwegians and Danes are increasingly concerned over the danger of war, but out of consideration for their NATO ties may be less active than Sweden in pressing for Peiping's admission.

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